

Germany impossible. Billow admits in his book that the gulf between" France and Germany was too wide to be bridged. France was suspicious of all our approaches to Germany; and German policy in Morocco and in regard to the fleet made friendly relations with us difficult. Your task was pretty hopeless.

G. As long as Holstein was there, nothing could be done.

7. Holstein was half cracked.

G. And Bulow was false. Look at his treatment of Chamberlain.

/ I should prefer the word slippery.

G. Yes, slipper}' is better.

7. There were difficulties on this side also. I am impressed by Eyre Crowe's intense hostility to Germany.

G. Crowe was anti-German. But I don't think the Minutes of officials ought to be published, or they will be afraid to write them.

/ They "add greatly to the interest and value of diplomatic publications. Sir Austen Chamberlain has given us a free hand, except as regards obviously hasty and unconsidered Minutes, which we have no desire to publish.

AGADIR

I. I have always regretted that you authorised Lloyd George's "Mansion House speech and did not keep the Agadir issue in your own hands.

G. But Germany had sent me no reply; and did it not prevent war?

L Possibly, though I don't think it was so near as that. The Kaiser and Bethmann were opposed to war over Morocco. But it made very bad blood, played into the hands of Tirpitz and the Militarists, and led to the increase of armaments.

G. That is very interesting. If it is the case, it shows how bad the situation in Europe was. They began it by sending a ship to Agadir.

L The Germans think that France began it by the occupation of Fez.

1914

L Foreigners find it difficult to believe that you never enquired about the details of the naval discussions with Russia.

G. I did not, and I believe very little was actually done. In any case there could have been nothing

affecting naval strategy, like
the Mediterranean agreement of 1912,
which was important.

L In July 1914 the ideal would have been
for you to state in
good time what we should do. But I know
that was impossible,
as the Cabinet was divided.

G. Quite impossible.

I. You were widely blamed for not urging
Russia to abstain
from any irrevocable step which might
start hostilities.